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Dear Wilson Rawls,

Four months ago I lost my dog Tori Jo to cancer of the mouth. In the final chapter of your book, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, I found myself crying, head aching, and missing her all over again. I couldn't control the emotions that came spilling out of me. To tell the truth, a book has never impacted me like this, ever.

Like when Billy is running with Old Dan and Little Ann in the hunting contest it reminded me of all the adventures and great memories I had with Tori. I'm 11 and when Tori had to be put to sleep she was 15 ½ years old. From the time I was born we were inseparable. She used to sleep under my bassinet to protect me. She was such a huge part of my family's jigsaw puzzle, now a giant piece is permanently missing. I try not to think about it because it is still very painful.

I know death is part of life. I have been very lucky not to have lost my grandparents or close family members. Tori felt like family to me, though. I will never forget her floppy ear, pointed tail, and that one miscolored paw that was white and not black like the others. The red collar that she always wore reminded me of when Billy saw the dog collar with the name Buddie on it. Whenever I see the professional sketched picture we have of her, where her red collar hangs, I have a connection to your book.

Like Billy (you) I have two younger sisters, only I am a girl too. My baby sister was only a year old when Tori passed away, she'll never have memories of this special dog. My 7 year old sister misses Tori as much as I do and still sometimes bursts into tears when she is reminded of "TO-To" as she called her.

Like Old Dan, Tori clung to life her last few days. It was a very sad and emotional time at our house because we knew she was dying. My parents finally made the hard decision to help her not have pain anymore when our vet asked them, "Is Tori happy?" As hard as it was we knew it was her time. We loved her so much.

As you can see my life and Billy's have many interesting parts. But the common factor is our never ending love for our dogs, now and forever.

Where the Red Fern Grows is a well written novel because it grabs you by the hand and takes you running with Billy and his dogs in the Ozarks. Good emotions come out in this book as well as sad, sad ones. Now when I think of Tori, I'll have a connection to you as an awesome author! Who knows, maybe I'll write a book someday about Tori and all the stories of her I keep close to my heart.

Sincerely,
Joscelyn Miner

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